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ABSTRACT

The function of qualitative research in education is examined, taking into account the curriculum development of one institution, the Escuela Normal Veracruzana, Jalapa (Mexico), which is one of the oldest teacher training colleges (dating from 1886) still functioning in Mexico. Although this academic institution never traditionally promoted the sort of research activities associated with the detailed analysis of data collected in fieldwork, educational ethnography and qualitative research are now having a considerable impact in this and other academic establishments concerned with education and pedagogy. Curriculum development is traced over the years as it responded to educational trends and political change. From about 1981, the school began to be conceptualized as a producer of pedagogical knowledge, rather than just a consumer. This has called for a new emphasis on educational ethnography and qualitative research. Both are expected to be prime sources of future pedagogical thought. Thirteen Mexican Spanish-language references are listed. (SLD)

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The Function of Qualitative Analysis:Perspective from a Escuela Normal in Mexico

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Abstract

In this paper I will examine the present function of Qualitative Research taking into account the curriculum development of one institution: the Escuela Normal Veracruzana, in Jalapa, Veracruz, Mexico. As in this same Symposium Martha Corenstein will talk about the form Qualitative Research is taking in present day Mexico, I will speak primarily of function. Inspite of the fact that this academic institution never, until very recently, promoted the sort of research activities associated with the detailed analysis of data collected in fieldwork, Educational Ethnography and Qualitative Research are having a considerable impact both in this and in other academic establishments connected with Education and Pedagogics. This work deals with the factors underlying this phenomenon. It is hoped that the conclusions of this paper will serve as a working hypothesis for future research.

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I

The Escuela Normal Veracruzana

The Escuela Normal Veracruzana at Jalapa, state capital of the Mexican State of Veracruz, is one of the oldest teacher training colleges still functioning in Mexico. It was founded in 1886 and it represents a prestigious tradition in its own field.

In 1885 the State Government of Veracruz encouraged a German inmigrant teacher to use his very successful primary school (Escuela Modelo de Orizaba) as a training school where one headmaster from every municipality in the State could learn the most modern methods of teaching (Larroyo:318-320).

The curriculum of such training included (Hermida:212) : Introduction the Pedagogical Sciences, Physiology, Pedagogical Psychology, Didactics, Theory of Discipline, Logic, French and English. Mornings were for observation of the methods used by the teachers at the Escuela Modelo. Afternoons were for classes, and the following day trainees were supposed to give the lesson observed the previous day, after that "As is usual in these cases, people went on to a classroom where a pedagogical critique of the class given took place",(quoted by Hermida:212). Six months later, the trainees were successfully examined, and then returned to their municipalities to divulge the new methods.

A few months later the State Government issued a decree creating the Escuela Normal Veracruzana. Entrants were required to be at least 15 years old, to have good renowened morals, to have primary education, to have good health and to be vaccinated (Hermida:233-234). The curriculum of the Escuela Normal

Veracruzana comprised for the first year: Spanish, Penmanship, Mathematics (Arithmetic and Geometry), Pedagogical Anthropology (introduction to Pedagogical Sciences, Elementary Physiology, Elementary Domestic and School Hygiene, Elementary Pedagogical Psychology), French, Drawing, Singing and Gymnastics.

The 2nd year subjects were: Spanish, Penmanship, Mathematics (Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry), Pedagogics (Didactics,Methodology and School Discipline), French, Natural Sciences (Botanical Studies, Elementary Chemistry, Mineralogy and Geology with special emphasis on industrial and agricultural life), Geography, History, Drawing, Bookkeeping, Singing and Gymnastics.

The 3rd year subjects were: Spanish, Mathematics, Pedagogics (Methodology, School Legislation and General Pedagogics), English, Natural Sciences (Physics and Zoology), Geography, History, Civic Instruction, Drawing, Bookkeeping, Singing and Gymnastics.

The 4th year subjects were: Principles of Grammar, Mathematics (Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry), Pedagogics, English, Natural Science (Chemistry), Geography, History, Singing, Gymnastics.

The 5th year subjects were: Pedagogics, Logic, Morals, Elementary Political Economy, Natural Science (Physics). Finally, there was a small area of practical courses like the Hygiene ones, Bookkeeping and all the references,in Natural Sciences to industrial and agricultural life.

It is worth noticing how the curriculum stressed four different areas of training. By far the most important area was formed by basic subjects - that teachers were to impart later at primary schools - like Spanish, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, English, French, Singing and Gymnastics. The second area of interest

included sujects related to ways and methods of teaching children, that is to say, all the pedagogical courses. There is a third interesting area formed by subjects of a more advanced nature like Morals, Logic and Political Economy typical of the Comtean Positivist approach according to which one starts with Mathematics, on to Natural Sciences, and end up with Logic. (Zea:55) This same pattern is discerned in contemporary curricula of other professional studies such as Veterinarian Studies of 1886, which had for the last year of the career studies in Logic and Political Economy together with specifically veterinarian subjects (Mayer:91-126). Curiously enough, this trait whereby the last year is dedicated to subjects which are not to be taught to children, and are part of the general education of the teacher is the first antecedent of a tendency that was going to acquire an overwhelming and increasing importance up to the present: a professionalization of teacher education which does not include the direct study of the subjects to be taught.

The Revolution

In 1915 the curriculum was changed in order to update it in accordance with the revolutionary winds blowing throughout the land.

The 1st year subjects were (Galván:450-2): National Language (Spanish), Arithmetic, Elementary Anatomy, Philosophy and Hygiene, Botanical Studies, Mexican Geography, French, Elementary Bookkeeping, Drawing and Manual Work, Penmanship, Typewriting, Physical Training, Music, and Agriculture.

The 2nd year subjects were Spanish - called National Language for nationalistic reasons " lengua nacional"-, Arithmetic and

Algebra, Elementary Anatomy, Philosophy, Hygiene and Child Psychology, Mexican and Continental Geography, History of the Fatherland, Zoology, French, Greek and Latin Roots, Penmanship, Drawing and Manual Work, Typewriting, Physical Training, Music, Agriculture.

The 3rd year subjects were National Language, Algebra, Geometry, Pedagogic Psychology, Methodology and Pedagogics, Physics, General Geography, General History, especially that of the Americas, Civic Education, English, Drawing and Manual Work, Physical Culture, Music.

The 4th year subjects were National Language (Notions of Literature), Notions of Logic, Pedagogics and Methodology, School Hygiene, Geometry and Notions of Land Surveying, General History, notions of Social and Political Economy, Descriptive Cosmography, Chemistry, Mineralogy and Geology, English, notions of Morals, Physical Culture, Music.

The coeducational curriculum, or of girls only colleges changed Music and Agriculture for Horticulture and Floriculture. The same applied for the 2nd year, and Greek Roots was eliminated. In third vear, National Language included Greek and Latin Roots, and instead of Drawing and Manual Work you had Home Economics, and Garment Making.

In this curriculum, nationalism is stressed, as well as a more decisive emphasis on practical subjects: Agriculture, Typewriting, Manual work, Land Surveying; apart from the fact that training was reduced one year in order to prepare more teachers. In this epoch, never had so many teaching posts been created in the State of Veracruz.(Villegas: 364) However the basic pattern established by the positivistic pedagogues was

maintained, even though Pedagogics practically disappeared from the curriculum, and education focussed on knowledge of the subjects to be imparted in primary schools.

Once the armed struggle phase of the Revolution had passed, in 1929, primary school teacher education was increased to six years. The first three years were actually secondary education, and the other three the professional cycle.The new curriculum lasted from 1929 until 1934 (Galván:456-8). It included as new subjects Pedagogical Anthropolgy, Pedagogic Psychology, Teaching Techniques, Small Industries, Agricultural Practices, Teaching Practice, Principles of Education, Adolescent Psychology, School Organization and Administration, Sociology, Philosophy, Social Problems of Mexico, and Contemporary Sociology.

Socialist Education

In 1934 a socialist curriculum was implanted in consonance with the introduction of a clause about the socialist nature of education into the Mexican Constitution.

The 1935 curriculum (Galván:459-462) comprised for the 1st year Physical Culture, Practice of Agriculture and Zootechnics, a Trade, Music and Chorus , Drawing, Castilian, French or English, Arithmetic, Physical Geography, Botanical Studies, Writing, Social Activities.

The courses for the 2nd year were the same as in the previous year for the first seven subjects. Then, instead of Arithmetic, they had Algebra and Geometry, they also had Physics, Geography of Mexico and Veracruz, General History (Medieval and Ancient), Social Activities and Zoology.

The 3rd year courses were Physical Culture, Practice of

Agriculture and Zootechnics, a Trade, Music and Chorus, Drawing, Castilian and Spanish American Literature, French or English, Geometry and Trigonometry, Chemistry, General Geography, General History (Modern and Contemporary), Mexican History, Human Anatomy and Physiology, Civicism, Social Activities.

The 4th year courses were Physical Culture, Practice of Agriculture and Zootechnics, a Trade, General Literature, Etymology, Cosmography, Social and Economic Geography, Pedagogical Anthropology, School Hygiene, Psychology, Teaching Techniques, History of the Working Class Movement, Social Activities, School Practice.

The 5th year courses were Physical Culture, Practice of Agriculture and Zootechnics, Industrialization of Natural Products, Logic, Biology, Pedagogical Psychology, Principles of Education, Teaching Techniques, Economic Science, Agrarian and Labour Laws, Paedeutics, Child Exercise, Social Activities and School Practice.

The 6th year courses were Physical Culture,Practice of Agriculture and Zootechnics, Industrialization of Natural Products, Psychology of Adolescence, School Administration and Organization, Principles of Education, Teaching Techniques, History of Education, History of Culture, Ethics and Aesthetics, Sociology, Marxist Philosophy, Social Economy and Social Problems of Mexico, Social Activities and School Practice.

The end of Socialist Education

In 1946 the Mexican Constitution was changed, and the reference to the socialist character of public education was abolished. In Veracruz the curriculum of the Escuela Normal

Veracruzana was again changed.

This new curriculum (Galván:473-476) dropped from the first three years of secondary education Social Activities, and Practice of Agriculture and Zootechnics from the first year, and reintroduced Manual Work now named Manual Arts for boys, and Domestic Science for girls.

Changes were much more noticeable at the professional level, that is to say the 4th, 5th and 6th years. The courses for the 4th year were Educational Sciences (Theory of Instruction), School Hygiene, Teaching Techniques,School Practice, General Psychology, Logic, Spanish, Greek and Latin Roots, State Geography, Manual Work, French, Games and Sports, Agricultural and Cattle Practice.

The courses for the 5th year were Educational Sciences, Paedeutics and Paediatecnics, Teaching Techniques, School Practice, Biology, General Literature, Economics, Children's Exercises, French, Games and Sports, Agricultural and Cattle Practice, Industries.

The courses of the 6th year were Educational Sciences, Teaching Techniques, School Practice, History of Education, Pedagogical Psychology, School Administration and Organization, Ethics, Sociology, Pedagogical Psychotechniques, Games and Sports, Agricultural and Cattle Practice, Industries.

The emphasis was clearly placed on techniques, whereas all courses that smacked of Marxism were out. At the same time, other subjects had their names changed, while most of the curriculum remained the same.

As from 1965 the curriculum (Galván:495-499)only covers the years of professional training, which were increased to four

years after secondary education.

1st subjects were Economic, Social and Cultural Problems of Mexico, Logic, Spanish, State Geography, Cultural and Social Anthropology, Ethics, Mexican History, and Mathematics. Activities: School observation, Workshop or Home Economics, Artistic Activities, Agricultural and Cattle Activities, Physical Education.

2nd year subjects were General Psychology, General Didactics, Biological Sciences, Psychology of Learning, History of Education, and Education for Health. Activities: Teaching Techniques, School Practice, Materials Workshop and Didactic Resources; Artistic Activities Applied to Primary School, Agricultural and Cattle Practice; Workshops; Physical Education.

3rd year subjects were Pupil's Knowledge and Pedagogical Psychotechniques, History of Education in Mexico and Veracruz, Educational Science, Educational Psychology, School Legislation, Organization and Administration, Sociology of Education. Activities: Teaching Techniques, School Practice, Materials Workshop and Didactic Resources, Artistic Activities Applied to Primary School, Agricultural and Cattle Practice; Workshops; Physical Education Applied to Primary School.

4th year subjects were Work Technique and Organization in Unitary Schools; Research Techniques and Community Betterment; Pedagogical Evaluation Techniques; and History of the Mexican Revolution and Educational Policy. Activities:Teaching Techniques, School Practice, Materials Workshop and Didactic Resources, Artistic Activities Applied to Primary School, Agricultural and Cattle Practice; Workshops; Physical Education Applied to Primary School.

In this curriculum, during the first and second years the courses covered basic subjects to be taught at primary school, and social and psychological subjects which were considered to be important. On the other hand, it distingued Activities as a different area of the curriculum altogether, denoting their practical nature for teaching practice, as much as for pupils.

It is worth noticing that this change in the curriculum stregthned a tendency present since 1929, when a clear difference appeared between the secondary education level and the professional one. This difference meant that the professional courses tended to be about Psychological, Sociological, and Pedagogical subjects. It is implicitly assumed that, by this time, future teachers had a sufficiently firm grasp of the contents of primary school courses.

The curriculum of 1984

This curriculum is still valid, and it represented a major transformation in the nature of "Educación Normal". As from this moment its degrees gained the same status as university ones. Even though the curriculum comprises three different degrees, one for primary school education, one for pre-primary school education, and the other for learning problems, all of them share the same structure. I will refer here to the curriculum in primary school education (Acercamiento a un Perfil Diagnóstico de la Institución:153).

1st semester sujects are Seminar on Mexico's Social, Economic and Political Development I, Evolutive Psychology I, Mathematics, Educational Theory (Epistemological Basis), Spanish I, Observation of Educational Practice I, Health Education, Artistic

Apreciation.

2nd semester subjects are Seminar on Mexico's Social, Economic and Political Development II, Evolutive Psychology II, Statistics, Educational Theory (Axiology and Teleology), Spanish II, Observation of Educational Practice II, Health Education, Artistic Apreciation.

3rd semester subjects are Mexico's Social, Economic and Political Problems I, Educational Psychology, Educational Technology I, Educational Research I, Children's Literature, Introduction to Teaching Laboratory, Physical Education I, Artistic Apreciation.

4th semester subjects are Mexico's Social, Economic and Political Problems II, Psychology of Learning, Educational Technology II, Educational Research II, Primary School Educational Learning Contents I, Teaching Laboratory, Physical Education II, Scientific Creativity and Development.

5th semester subjects are The Mexican State and The Mexican Educational System, Social Psychology, Educational Technology and Computers, Educational Planning, Primary School Educational Learning Contents II, Teaching Laboratory II, Technological Education I.

6th semester subjects areSociology of Eduction, Scientific Organization of the Schoool Group and Educational Psychology, Curriculum Design, Primary School Educational Learning Contents III, Teaching Laboratory III, Technological Education II.

7th semester subjects are Community and Development, Learning Problems, Educational Evaluation, Comparative Pedagogics Seminar, Primary School Eductional Learning Contents IV, Teaching Laboratory, Working Organization and Techniques.

8th semester subjects are National Identity and Values Seminar, Educational Policy Prospective Seminar, Social Responsability of Primary Education Graduates Seminar, Educational Administration Seminar, Seminar on Mexican Educational Contribution to Pedagogics, Seminar on Contemporary Educational Models, Seminar on Primary School Academic Administration, Primary School Educational Learning Contents V, Teaching Laboratory V, Seminar for the Elaboration of the Graduating Thesis ("documento de recepción"), Ecology II.

This curriculum was implemented throughout the Republic. Thus, a long tradition of local curricular autonomy was broken. The reason for this notorious growth of Federal control over the curriculum was that the teaching profession had gained the same stature as university education and that their degrees were now "licenciaturas", and its quality had to be guaranteed.

The consequences

A hundred years ago when the E.N.V. began, Educational and Pedagogical knowledge existed outside teacher training colleges. Nowadays, insofar as degrees have the same value as university ones, at least formally, the previous dependency of "Escuelas Normales" on knowledge generated in universities is broken. What is more, with the promotion of the academic status of "Escuelas Normales", they are placed in the core of the discipline. In other words, whereas before, "Escuelas Normales" were supossed to be "consumers" of Pedagogical and Educational Knowledge generated in universities, as fron 1984, they were supossed to be producers of such knowledge.

This characteristic is clearly represented by the presence of

such courses as Observation of Educational Practice, Educational Research and seminars, as these subjects are supposed to generate knowledge. What is more, the curriculum itself proclaims that teachers should be "profesores investigadores", that is teachers, and researchers of their owm activity. These new conditions in the way this educational system operates can be characterized as follows:

1.- The most prominent feature of the academic tradition represented by the E.N.V. is the very close parallel between changes in the curriculum and changes in the ideological direction of the Mexican State. In this sense each curriculum clearly represents a political statement. Thus the pedagogic impulse of the Escuela Normal Veracruzana corresponds with influence of the Positivist "científicos" throughout the Porfirista regime (de Gortari:316-8) . The nationalistic and pragmmatic impetus of the revolutionary period, and the socialist tendencies of the 30's are equally reflected. A decade later, the the abolition of the socialist content of education, and the emphasis on technical subjects corresponds to Alemanista years when the government was actively promoting industrialization and foreign investment. Finally, the 1984 changes were part of a much wider effort of the Federal Government's effort of rationalizing the Mexican State after the crisis of 1982. This dependency on State policy creates as from 1984 a distinct series of pressures on institutional life. (Aguilar:47-8). In this respect, it is important to recall that insofar as Mexican public universitites are autonomous, this dependency will probably be more tenuous in these latter cases.

2.- The curricular obligation of promoting "profesores

investigadores" in Escuelas Normales imposes an academic burden quite foreign both to their tradition and to the skills and knowledge of its staff.

The tendency referred to above in relation to an increasing professionallization in terms of subjects studied is counterbalanced marginally insofar as 5 courses altogether are introduced on Primary School Educational Contents. As for the rest of the courses, they definitely come to represent the crystallization of this professionallizing tendency and its culmination.

3.- Within this tendency, the weight of the educational effort is placed to a great extent - the exceptions being the psychological and sociological courses - on subjects that are specific to the field of education. This feature implicitly presumes that the educational field itself is capable of generating a sufficient body of knowledge to sustain the discipline. This necessarily creates a great deal of pressure on the discipline for new knowledge, insofar as it requires of explanations and information that justifies the existence of the form it takes as a discipline. In the case of the Escuela Normales, the problem is pressumedly solved by creating a group of research oriented courses.

4.-This partial solution creates, at its turn a demand for research methods. The two disciplines most likely to furnish them are Psychology and Sociology. In Psychology the main body of research has for some time been quite clearly of a quantitative nature. The situation in Sociology has been far more complex. First of all, during the Sixties and Seventies, Latin American Sociology experienced a very considerable radicalization begining

with the Cuban Revolution in 1959, and continuing until the Eighties in consonnnance with a general trend in the Western World as from the end of the Sixties. By the begining of the Eighties it was clear to the most critical Latin American sociologists that most, though not all Radical and Marxist Latin American Sociology was of a very poor quality. In Mexico it was widely considered - unless proven otherwise - as being "rollo", that is to say repetitive, dogmatic, and demagogic work that did not generate any new knowledge, or even new insights into current problems. As part of a reaction to the to this, most serious researchers looked upon quantitative methods as the way out. A few others looked upon the ethnographic tradition as a way of salvaging important qualitative questions about educational tendencies, processes and practices. That is why, in Martha Corenstein work the Anthropology Department of the Iberoamericana University appears as a small irradiation center.

5.- Throughout the Seventies a period of radicalization swept Mexico's public academic establishments. Radicalism was encouraged rather openly, at least at a discursive level by the federal Government if not by the President himself. Radicals looked upon Sociology as a source of criticism of technical and experimental minded courses, which meant in this case basically Psychological ones. Radical Sociology was fairly Marxist and fairly orthodox, It was the heyday of manuals and handbooks on Marxism, Dialectics, Materialism, and Marxist Methodologies and research methods.The growth of the Left in Mexican Public Universities (García, Zermeño, Alvarez) throughout the seventies was parallel to a tremendous growth in the university population, which grew from 86,524 in 1961 to 240,603 in 1971, to

785,419 in 1981 (Data for 1961 from Revista del Centro de Estudios Educativos,vol. II (1972), pp. 125-165. Data for 1971 and 1981 from ANUIES, Población de Licenciatura en México 1981 and for 1991.

These factors created a tremendous demand for radical literature. Its my contention that much of the literature put forward at that time was primarily a market reaction to a heavy and healthy demand. Before long, however, as the Left became more and more entangled in the intricacies of university politics, its prestige diminished in direct proportion, and so did the overwhelming prestige of radical literature. This movement away from radicalism for its own sake opened the way for a more discriminating attitude towards educational literature.

In the field of Educational Ethnography, Elsie Rockwell, a prominent scholar states in 1983, in a joint paper with Espeleta that their work is inscribed within the ethnographic tradition " as an effort "to document non documented reality". We have analysed and discussed its possibilities so as capture daily life, and we believe we have transformed its colonial perspective ... in order "to look from below" ... It is necessary to know the fabric of school life because that knowledge is simultaneously the point of departure and the real content of new pedagogical and political alternatives".(Rockwell:4). With this sort of argument, the potential of Qualitative Research is fully legitimized before a public still sensitive to Radicalism.

6.- Even though I concentrate exclusively on one institution, it is my contention that these factors can account, mutatis mutandis for the growing importance of Qualitative Analysis in different Mexican schools and faculties in the

field of Pedagogics and "Normal" education.

7.- Even though the curriculum of the Escuelas Normales can, and will probably change in the near future, both Quantitative and Qualitative Research are called to be prime sources of future Pedagogical thought.

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